

R U L E S
OF THE
BENEVOLENT SOCIETY,
INSTITUTED AT MANCHESTER,
JULY 11, 1790.

I was a Stranger, and ye took me in—Sick, and ye visited me.

MATT. XXV. 35, 36.

Blessed is the Man that provideth for the sick and needy, the Lord shall deliver him in the Time of Trouble.

PSALM xli. 1.

The Founder of this Society had long been desirous of attempting to alleviate the spiritual and temporal Sorrows of his *needy* Fellow-Creatures. For it frequently happens that penury and gross ignorance meet in the same Object; and in this populous Town the Instances of this description are numerous. And as the communicating of good affords gratification to the humane, and is the indispensable duty of the sincere Christian, it was thought proper to unite in the form of a Society for the purpose of promoting this excellent Design.

R U L E S.

I. **T**HIS Society shall consist of as many persons as chuse to become Subscribers of at least one penny per Week, or one shilling per Quarter each, for the purpose of raising a fund for the Sick and Indigent of every denomination, and particularly the Sick-poor Strangers.

II. The Affairs of this Society shall be managed by a Committee of Fifteen persons, all Members of the Church of England, and Subscribers to the fund; out of whom shall be chosen the President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Secretary. The Committee shall be appointed annually by nomination; the present Committee having been chosen by the Society at large, each of whom at the expiration of the year, on the first Sunday after the Eleventh of July, shall name a person, duly qualified, as his Successor.

III. If any of the Committee shall decease, or neglect to nominate his Successor, after the space of three months a Majority of the Committee shall fill up the Vacancy. And if the number of Votes, on this or any other occasion, be equal, the President shall have the casting vote.

IV. This Meeting shall be held at the School Room in Falkner-street, near St. James's Church, every Sunday Morning at Nine o'clock, to consult upon the most proper methods of carrying the intentions of this Society into effect. At which as many of the Committee as can should attend, together with the President, Treasurer, and Secretary; and also the Visitors. And any Subscriber may have access to these Meetings.

V. Any Number of the Committee, who shall be present at the Weekly Meetings, shall be deemed sufficient for transacting the ordinary business of the Society; and if the President be absent, a Chairman, pro tempore, shall be chosen from among themselves.

VI. That as many Members of the Church of England, as circumstances may require, (previously appointed by the Committee) do act as Visitors for
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one month; and in cases where it may be improper for Men to visit, the Committee shall appoint Women to visit in their stead.

VII. The Visitors shall, in cases of extreme necessity by sickness, have a discretionary power (if the fund will admit,) to give any sum not exceeding one shilling and six-pence; and at the next meeting they shall lay the circumstances before the Society, that they may have the money so advanced repaid them. But where it shall be less urgent, the Case shall be reported at the next meeting, and such Relief administered as shall be then approved of by a majority of the Committee.

VIII. The Names and Places of Abode of the Subscribers shall be entered in a Book kept for that purpose; the expence of which, as well as all other expences of the like kind, may be defrayed out of the fund of the Society,

IX. Every Subscriber to this Charity shall have the privilege of recommending to the Committee any Sick-poor person, a proper object: which would be best done, by giving in writing, on Sunday Morning during the Meeting, the name, place of abode, and the particular circumstances of distress of the person so recommended,

X. No person shall be allowed to give any Relief out of this fund, but the Visitors, or by order of the weekly Meeting.

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XI. The Visitors are, at a convenient season, to inquire into the Spiritual state of the persons whom they visit; improve the dispensations of the afflicted by suitable advice; direct them to the great Physician of Souls, and pray with them. And in cases of difficulty to apply to the Minister for his direction.

XII. This Society shall hold a quarterly Meeting of as many Subscribers as chuse to attend, convened by public Notice given for that purpose in the said School Room, the Sunday next but one before the said Meeting; when and where alone Regulations are to be made, by the Votes of three fourths of the Subscribers, which shall not interfere either with the 2d or the 6th Rule, in the Government or Policy of this Society.

XIII. The Names, Places of Abode, Cafes, &c. of the persons relieved and Sums given to each, are all to be entered regularly in a Book by the Secretary; and to be open to the Committee for inspection at the weekly Meeting, and produced at the general quarterly Meeting to the Subscribers at large.

XIV. It is expected that some proper person will begin or end the Meeting of this Society with Prayer, as time shall permit.

SOLI DEO GLORIA.

N. B. *This Society is the first of the kind ever instituted at Manchester. Fifteen months after its establishment, (because that none but Members of the Church of England were admitted as Visitors,) several of its members seceded, and promoted the Strangers Friend Society.*

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